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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF HOME ECONOMICS
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ROAST TURKEY WITH SAVORY STUFFING

Selecting the turkey

Select a plump, well-fattened turkey, and find out whether it is a young or an old bird because this makes a difference in the way you cook it. For each person to be served, allow $3/4$ to 1 pound in the weight of the turkey as you buy it. A 15-pound turkey makes about 20 generous servings.

Preparing the bird for roasting

In drawing the turkey, first cut the skin at the back of the neck, slip it down, and carefully remove the crop without tearing the outer skin. Then cut the neck off short, and save it for making broth to use in the gravy. Then make the cut across the lower part of the body no wider than necessary to draw the bird. Leave a band of skin and flesh under the tail so that the legs can be securely tucked in after the bird is stuffed. Save the giblets for the gravy. Cut off the oil sac on the top of the tail, and pull out the pin feathers with tweezers or a strawberry huller. Singe off the hairs over a flame quickly so as not to darken or scorch the skin.

If the bird was carefully drawn, you will only need to wipe out the body cavity with a soft cloth wrung out of cold water. Scrub the outside with a wet cloth and a little soap or soda, or corn meal. Rinse off the outside quickly and wipe the bird dry outside and inside. Never let a turkey or any other poultry soak in water. You lose flavor and food value.

Stuffing and trussing

When you are ready to cook the turkey, rub the inside with salt, and fill the body cavity and the loose skin at the base of the neck with a hot savory stuffing (recipe below). Slip the crusty end slice of a loaf of bread into the opening near the tail to hold in the stuffing, tuck the legs under the band of skin, and sew up the slit with soft white twine. Fold the neck skin toward the back and fasten down with a skewer or stitches. Fold the wing tips under the back, and tie them down if necessary, but be careful not to run string across the breast for it will leave marks on the brown surface.

Then rub the stuffed, trussed turkey all over with salt and butter, and pat it with flour. Place back up and breast down on a rack in an open roasting pan. Lay a piece of the turkey fat over the back. Do not put any water into the pan. Water in a roasting pan makes steam, and steam around a roasting turkey or any tender meat draws out the juices.

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Roasting

Have the oven at a moderate temperature when you put the turkey in, and cook at moderate temperature all the way. Suit the oven temperature to the weight of the bird as you buy it in the market (picked but not drawn and including head and feet).

For a fat young turkey, over 10 but under 14 pounds (market weight), roast at constant-moderate temperature--300° F. Allow 3 to 3½ hours.

For larger turkeys, 14 to 18 pounds, use 275° F. the entire time, and allow 5 to 5½ hours for roasting. Smaller birds (less than 10 pounds), need a higher temperature, about 325° F., and often take 3 hours to roast.

Start roasting the bird with the back up and breast down. Keeping the back up most of the time allows the thighs to cook thoroughly without overcooking the breast. Every half hour turn the bird and baste it with the pan drippings, or with melted butter or other fat. To keep from breaking the skin in turning, lift the turkey at the head and foot, using clean folded cloths to protect the hands.

To test for "doneness", run a steel skewer or a cooking fork into the thickest part of the breast and into the thigh next to the breast. If the meat is tender and the juice does not show a red tinge, the turkey is done.

For a turkey a year or more old, add a cup of water, cover the roaster to hold in steam, and allow more time for cooking than for the young birds of the same weight.

Savory Stuffing for a 10- to 12 pound Turkey

2 to 2½ quarts dry bread crumbs	1 pint chopped celery
¾ cup fat, butter and turkey fat	2 teaspoons salt
1 small onion, chopped	1 to 2 teaspoons savory seasoning
½ cup chopped parsley	Pepper to taste

In the melted fat cook the onion, parsley, and celery for a few minutes. Add the bread crumbs and seasonings and stir all together until the mixture is thoroughly heated. Pile the hot stuffing lightly into the turkey, but do not pack.

If desired, in place of some of the bread crumbs, use shelled nuts (chestnuts, hazelnuts, or filberts, pine nuts, almonds).

Giblet Gravy

Simmer the giblets (liver, gizzard, and heart) and the neck in 1 quart of water for about an hour. Drain the giblets and chop them fine. If there is too much fat on the drippings in the roaster, skim off some of the excess fat, and leave about ½ cup. Into these pan drippings, stir 4 level tablespoons of flour. Then gradually add the cool broth and enough more cold water to make a thin, smooth gravy. Cook for 5 minutes, add the chopped giblets, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR CARVING A TURKEY

Carving knife (sharp as possible) with long blade.

Carving fork (two tines preferred).

Platter, adequate size, and another plate.

The turkey rides in on the platter, back down. The carver may stand or sit, depending on personal preference; usually a person with short arms prefers to stand. Turn the platter with the legs of the bird pointed toward the carver, or place the bird broadside with the legs toward the left.

First, remove the leg from the body, insert the fork in the thigh to hold the bird firmly, or with the fingers of the left hand grasp the end of the leg bone. Then cut cleanly between the leg and the body and, with a slight twist on the end of the drumstick, the leg will usually separate easily. Put the point of the knife through the joint, and cut the skin between the leg and the back, but be careful not to cut the "oyster" in two. The oyster, sometimes called the turkey tenderloin, is a small oval of exceptionally delicious dark meat that lies in the hollow of the back in front of the hip socket joint.

Next, lift the leg portion to a smaller plate, unless there is plenty of room on the edge of the platter. Separate the drumstick from the second joint and slice the meat from the second joint.

Now remove the wing from the body. To do this start your cut about one to one and a half inches above the point where the wing seems to join the body. Cut at an angle of about 45 degrees, and you will hit the joint exactly. Remove the wing also to the second plate and separate at the "elbow" joint.

Then place the fork squarely across the breastbone toward the end of the keel, to anchor the bird down with the left hand while you carve the breast in slices. Use a slight sawing motion. The trick in carving here is to keep the left hand still, holding the bird firmly on the platter, while the right hand does the carving. The breast is usually sliced down and away from the carver. After slicing the first piece of breast, begin to serve the plates by taking a spoonful of stuffing and arranging beside it a portion of white meat and a slice of dark.



